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Rubrics and Corrective Feedback in ESL Writing:

A Longitudinal Case Study of an L2 Writer

Estela Ene

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Virginia Kosobucki

IUPUI ScholarWorks

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Rubrics and Corrective Feedback in ESL Writing: A Longitudinal Case Study of an L2 Writer

Abstract

In teaching and assessing L2 writing, the ideal combination of Corrective Feedback (CF) and rubric use is yet to be determined. When rubrics are used with multiple drafts and assignments, teachers may wonder if other forms of CF are still necessary or useful. This longitudinal case study follows a learner's progress over the course of one year in order to explore the relationship between CF and rubrics as complementary parts of a repertoire of pedagogical instruments that *together* support students' development as language learners and writers. The study takes place in a context where rubrics are institutionally mandated and additional CF is optional. This classroom-based, teacher-led, action-research study finds that, when institutions require the use of form-focused CF and rubrics, it is possible that they discourage teacher written comments, thus depriving the student of personalized feedback. The learner improved her accuracy after receiving both form-focused CF and rubrics, but she valued marginal and end comments more, although she received these sparingly. It appears that institutionally mandated rubrics have some limiting effects on addressing aspects of writing other than form and can leave learners unsatisfied. We recommend supplementing rubrics with individualized comments when responding to and assessing L2 writing.

Keywords: corrective feedback, rubrics, direct feedback, indirect feedback

1. Introduction

Corrective feedback (CF) in L2 writing is important for teachers and students alike because it is believed to support language acquisition and because ultimately “accuracy matters in the world outside of the writing classroom” (Ferris, 2011, p. 14). The onus of responsibility lies on the teacher to provide effective feedback, and on the student to respond to that feedback, in order to prepare for the accuracy-laden world awaiting them.

Like CF, grading rubrics are part of the L2 writing classroom routine. Scoring with rubrics has a number of recognized benefits. Criteria shared with the students in advance become integrated into instruction as a formative teaching tool. They can also help a teacher to be consistent while assessing writing. Evidently, scoring rubrics “can simplify the grading process, as teachers can use checklists or numerical scores rather than writing lengthy comments or correcting every stylistic or grammatical infelicity” (Weigle, 2002, p. 183-184).

However, the ideal combination of CF and rubric use is yet to be determined. While the primary intention of providing feedback is to support the development of a learner's language

and writing, CF is intrinsically evaluative. The CF reflects some or all of the criteria in the rubrics used to evaluate student writing. It indicates what the learner should improve in order to obtain a positive final assessment (i.e., grade). Similarly, rubrics – when used throughout the writing process on successive drafts – constitute a type of CF (Hyland, 2003, p.181). The practicality of using rubrics alone can be tempting – more so than using CF to assign a grade (because CF is notoriously labor-intensive for teachers). When rubrics are used to evaluate a series of drafts or assignments, and thus become formative rather than summative, teachers may wonder if additional CF or comments are still needed. A practitioner might wonder which is better: CF alone, rubrics alone, or a combination of the two. The answer cannot be found in the current literature on assessment or CF in L2 writing, which lacks studies that connect the use of CF and rubrics. In this longitudinal case study, we analyze the cumulative effect of a combination of feedback, including direct and indirect error correction, comments, and rubrics, on an L2 writer's linguistic accuracy. The study relates the use of rubrics and CF to both improvements in targeted areas of linguistic accuracy and the student's perception of the usefulness of the feedback received.

2. Literature review

2.1 Corrective feedback (CF)

Feedback in the writing classroom is considered an essential element of guiding students in their writing development. The issue of CF in the field of L2 writing has been examined for a few decades, with some conclusive results. Over the years, there has been the usual ebb and flow of philosophy and practice, from the 'error-free,' grammar-focused expectations of the early years, to the recursive, process-oriented approach of later years. Ever since the early studies of Lalande (1982), and Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1986), research has sought to answer the question of the effectiveness of CF. Truscott (1996) controversially claimed that CF is not only

useless, but harmful to L2 writers. This in turn sparked a renewed interest on the part of researchers and practitioners to study the effects of CF, resulting in an increase in longitudinal controlled studies (see Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, for a comprehensive review).

Feedback studies display outcomes that match the predictions of major second language acquisition (SLA) theories. For example, Sheen (2010), and Ferris and Roberts (2001), argue that students' command of linguistic forms improves when they attend to feedback due to having their attention drawn to input-output gaps – consistent with Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990, 2001). Studies that analyze uptake and revisions – Ene and Upton (2014) and studies reviewed therein – describe the presence of corrections and revisions as support for the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985). Learner uptake, defined as “a student's utterance that immediately follows the teacher's feedback and that constitutes a reaction in some way to the teacher's intention to draw attention to some aspect of the student's initial utterance” (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p. 49), is considered an indication that corrective feedback is having an effect. In L2 writing, Storch and Wigglesworth (2010) see “revisions made in response to feedback” as providing a “measure of uptake” (p. 309) and an important insight on the language acquisition process, even though immediate uptake does not necessarily indicate long-term retention.

As repeatedly pointed out by reviewers (see Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2011), the conclusion among both researchers and L2 writing instructors is that CF in L2 writing instruction is both indispensable and debatable (Ferris, 2010, p.183). Students tend to make revisions where they receive feedback (electronic or written) (Ene & Upton, 2014; Ferris, 2007). Accuracy studies have shown that CF contributes to long-term retention of specific forms such as articles, past tense morphemes, and prepositions (Bitchener and Knoch, 2008a, 2008b; Sheen, 2010).

One of the most important distinctions for both practitioners and researchers is between *direct* versus *indirect CF*. Studies on direct and indirect CF have yielded mixed results (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p.36). Direct CF (DIR) is feedback that provides the student with the

correct form (i.e., crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or morphemes; inserting a missing word or morpheme; writing the correct word or form near the erroneous form) (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Indirect CF (IND) indicates that an error exists – by means of an underline, circle, code, or other mark – but does not provide the correction (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 83). A teacher must decide whether only to indicate that an error has occurred without showing where, locate the error (by circling it, highlighting it, or putting a checkmark in the margin), or locate and label the type of error (using symbols, codes, or verbal comments – Ferris, 2011, p. 99). Metalinguistic CF (a subset of IND) specifically uses either an error code or a brief grammatical description indicating the nature of the error (i.e., vf – verb form, sp – spelling). Indicating or locating an error, then, is considered uncoded feedback, whereas labeling is considered coded feedback. At lower levels of linguistic proficiency, it seems that, the more direct and focused the feedback, the more helpful it is (see Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2011), in addition to being preferred by both teachers and students (Baker and Bricker, 2010; Bitchener and Knoch, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010; Ellis, 2009; Sheen, 2007).

2.1 Rubrics

The use of rubrics became controversial soon after their official large scale introduction by the Educational Testing Services in the 1960s (Crusan, 2015, p.2). Rubrics can help achieve inter-rater and intra-rater reliability, as well as an increased sense of transparency that may help writers, through positive washback, to better understand, plan, and perform their writing tasks with decreased anxiety (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). A study involving university EFL writing students in Lebanon determined that using rubrics was effective in improving student writing, and students had positive attitudes and reactions to the use of rubrics (Diab & Balaa, 2011). However, there are concerns that rubrics can also limit a rater's assessment as well as a writer's approach by hyper-focusing writers on those aspects of writing specifically rewarded through the

assessment tool (Broad, 2003; Kohn, 2006; Wilson, 2006). Some have noted that rubrics can promote a focus on error (Balester, 2012; Weigle, 2007). Others point out that rubrics cannot capture or encourage the development of voice (Matsuda & Jeffery, 2012). Finally, in their meta-analysis of 21 research articles on rubrics, Panadero and Jonsson (2013) found that factors such as gender, topic, and educational level can moderate the formative effects of using rubrics, and that the effect of different kinds of rubrics and their use in conjunction with peer feedback are under-researched. Crusan (2015) also points out the limited array of research designs used in the existing studies on rubric-based assessment, and the obscuring effect this can have on truly understanding the effects of rubrics on assessing writing (p. 2).

3. The study

3.1 Purpose of the study

To a large extent, CF and rubrics serve the same purpose – to provide students with the feedback necessary to learn how to write in general and improve their assignments in particular. For the practitioners confronted almost daily with significant grading duties, it would be helpful to know whether both CF and rubrics are necessary, or only one or the other can be used without negative consequences for the learner. Unlike most L2 writing studies on CF, this case study follows a learner's progress over the course of one year in order to examine the effects of various kinds of CF – error correction, comments, and rubrics – on a L2 learner's accuracy. As Shao (2015) points out, researchers' recognition of feedback as a social act and a real-world practice has led to increasing interest in how teachers provide feedback in real classrooms, as well as how students perceive and react to their teachers' feedback practices in specific classroom contexts. The current study contributes to the current research by offering a classroom-based, teacher-led, action-research-based, and longitudinal perspective on teacher choices, and the combined effect of error correction, supplemental comments, and rubrics.

3.2 Research questions

The questions guiding this case study are:

1. What are the teacher practices in an institutional context where attention to form is emphasized, the use of rubrics is required, and supplemental comments are optional?
2. How is an L2 writer's linguistic accuracy development affected by the combined use of error correction, comments, and rubrics?
3. What are the student perceptions of and reactions to various kinds of CF and rubrics?

3.3 Study design

3.3.1 Context: The Language Center

The case study was conducted in an intensive, pre-university language study program (the Center) for international students in the United States. Most of the learners are international (visa) students, preparing to pursue an education in an English-dominant country. The Center offers courses organized into 12 levels and 13 four-week sessions throughout the year. The students enroll in courses based on an initial placement test.

The reading and writing curriculum at the Center is based on a textbook with readings and model essays of one type per level. In the beginning levels, students focus on sentence and paragraph construction. At the mid- to upper- levels, the focus is on writing essay types such as: process, compare/contrast, classification, problem/solution, cause/effect, and argument. In the higher levels, rhetorical styles include description, narration, process analysis, definition, and argument.

The writing courses at the Center are organized in a similar way at every level. The first week includes introducing the students to the rhetorical style they will be writing, by providing model essays to read and discuss, teaching the vocabulary and sentence structure needed, and pre-writing (brainstorming and outlining). In the second week the students write an in-class first

draft of the essay, after which the teacher provides feedback according to a system devised by the Center (explained in the next paragraph). At this point, the teacher does not score the essay, and may or may not offer additional CF that goes beyond the Center's required system, depending on experience and inclination. Also during the second week, the students hand-write a second draft in class, revising in response to the teacher's corrections. The second draft is corrected and scored by the teacher, using an institutionally-mandated analytic scoring rubric (see Appendix A). The rubrics are organized according to "above standard, standard, below standard, and unsatisfactory," and the category which is weighted the most is grammatical accuracy. Also at this point, the teacher can offer supplemental CF if (s)he wants to, in addition to circling the appropriate ranges on the rubric and using the TAGs-focused system described below. Finally, the student types a third draft for an extra five points, without receiving further CF or a rubric-based assessment. The teacher training module provided by the Center includes training on using the rubrics, marking TAGS, using editing symbols, and high-frequency word lists. Although the rubrics contain a space for comments, there is minimal training provided on responding to student writing with written comments. What we refer to here as 'supplemental CF,' therefore, are written comments of any kind, as that goes beyond what the Center actually requires.

The Center believes that, if students cannot express themselves accurately and clearly, their voices will not be heard by their readers, including future university professors. Writing well means writing accurately. The teaching and assessment of writing at the Center focuses on *Target Achievement Goals* (TAGs), which are key grammatical features (i.e., subject-verb agreement, verb form, word order, etc.) which students are expected to master as they progress. In dealing with TAGs, the Center teachers are encouraged to provide direct feedback (i.e., give the student the right answer) at levels 101-103, and then begin using indirect feedback in subsequent levels as follows: use editing symbols in levels 104-106 for errors the student should

have already mastered; use editing symbols for all errors in levels 107-109 for all grammatical structures they have been taught; and at levels 110-112 only circle the errors, expecting the student to be aware of and able to correct most errors. While the scoring rubrics are required of all of the writing teachers, the option to supplement rubrics with additional comments is allowed. The discussion of CF will be organized around error correction, which includes noting TAGS and editing symbols for errors, and supplemental comments, which are optional and may be given as marginal, end, or rubric comments.

The cycle of a paper in a writing course at the Center is represented in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 here]

3.3.2 Participant

The participant in this mini-case study is a 21-year old female from Saudi Arabia called Fatimah (pseudonym). Before coming to the Center, she had studied English in Saudi Arabia for 6 ½ years (6 in middle to high school, and one semester at university), and was not a true beginner. Based on the mandatory placement examination, she was placed in Level 101. She had never done spontaneous or essay writing in class, but rather was required to write memorized paragraphs and learn grammar rules. Fatimah's course of study at the Center spanned a 12-month period translating into 1084 hours in class.

3.3.3 Teachers

The teacher who conducted the study has an undergraduate degree in French and was completing her MA in English with a TESOL Concentration at the time of this study. Most teachers at the Center have a similar profile and overseas teaching experience. The Center encourages teacher training via CELTA Certification or TESOL Certification. Six teachers at the

Center taught the classes from which data were collected for this study, and four of the teachers taught her more than once. The researcher taught her at three points along her continuum – for levels 105, 111, and 112.

3.3.4 Materials

Over the year-long study, Fatimah produced an average of four writing samples per level at 12 levels, resulting in 48 samples of paragraphs, reading responses, and essays. The materials used to study Fatimah's development included at least two writing pieces from five different levels (102, 105, 108, 110, 112). Three specific levels (102, 105, 112), which represent beginner, intermediate, and advanced status, were examined comparatively, to provide insight about her longitudinal evolution with regard to linguistic development and response to CF. Level 102 was chosen as a baseline for error analysis. The researcher's feedback was analyzed for the study, as well as the feedback provided by Fatimah's other writing teachers. Error correction data were gathered from Levels 102, 105, 108, 110, and 112, and additional CF in the form of comments was examined from all levels, although some teachers provided none.

3.3.5 Methods

In order to answer RQ1 and RQ2, student errors and teacher CF were examined to observe the benefits of using CF. Errors, operationalized as “morphological, syntactic, and lexical forms that deviate from rules of the target language” (Ferris, 2011, p. 3), were counted and classified. CF is used as an umbrella term for all corrections and comments made by the instructors in addition to the rubric. As mentioned, CF in this study consists of error correction, which includes noting TAGS and using editing symbols for errors, and supplemental comments, which are optional and may be given as marginal, end, or rubric comments. As a result of using

this definition of CF, the results reported below are organized in two sections: error correction and supplemental comments.

The student papers were available as hard copies that the student had saved from her classes. The original CF given by her teachers was handwritten on the paper copies. The teacher-researcher read all of the papers, collected and tabulated number of errors (token), type of error (type - word choice, verb form, agreement, article, spelling, etc.), and how many received teacher CF. If an error did not receive CF, it was noted in the tabulations. Some errors, such as spelling, had more instances of CF omission than others. Perhaps this was due to teacher fatigue, time constraints, or other extenuating factors. If an error occurred several times in the same paper, it was generally counted only one time, so as to not penalize the student multiple times for the same error; an obvious exception to this is article errors, because a new and unique decision needs to be made each time a new phrase is constructed.

The teacher-researcher initially performed this analysis as part of an action research project related to her TESOL practicum. The second researcher designed the error classification system together with the teacher-researcher, as her practicum supervisor. When the classification was completed and tallies were entered into a table by the teacher-researcher, the other researcher reviewed the data and found the teacher-researcher's classification and counting to be accurate. The agreement rate between the two was 98%. The disagreements were about sentences in which errors were not marked by the original teacher or the teacher-researcher, but word choice or phrasing could have been identified as problematic. The researchers discussed the instances and agreed that those sentences were easily understandable by a first language (L1) speaker, and the expectation that a beginning or intermediate learner would make L1-like choices all the time was unrealistic. We decided not to count instances as word choice errors when they did not pose comprehension issues to the reader. An example of such an instance is the sentence

“the wedding party is separated between women and men.” (See Appendix B for sample student paper.)

CF realized as error correction was classified as direct (DIR) or indirect (IND), in accord with the prominence of this distinction in pedagogy and the CF literature. The materials collected from Levels 102, 105, 108, 110, and 112 were used to analyze CF patterns, and determine the most frequent error types in the student’s writing. The evolution of the learner’s four most frequent error types was further analyzed in order to understand the possible effect of the CF received.

To answer RQ3, two personal interviews were conducted with the participant to elicit her perceptions of the usefulness of rubrics and other CF. Teachers’ error correction, written comments, and rubrics were examined with the learner, and her perceptions were written down by the interviewer. The interviews were conducted directly after her completion of the year-long intensive study program in November, 2013, and occurred within a 4-week interval. The first interview, which lasted 1 hour, consisted of gathering background data on the learner, including her English language instruction prior to the intensive language program, her class and study schedule, teachers, outside language learning opportunities, etc. The second interview, which lasted 2 ½ hours, involved looking at her corrected papers and rubrics, and documenting her responses to the feedback she received. (For interview questions, see Appendix C.) The interview was semi-structured, involving pre-planned questions followed by free-flowing conversation. The author took field notes by typing the learner’s responses.

The section below summarizes the findings of the analysis. The teachers’ use of CF is be analyzed first, then connected to the student’s accuracy at the three levels of proficiency represented here. Finally, the student’s perceptions are explored before drawing conclusions and pedagogical implications.

4. Findings

4.1 Teacher use of written comments

Over the course of the year, Fatimah received CF realized as supplemental written comments in only six of the 12 courses. When she received supplemental feedback, it was by no means abundant: there were a total of 19 brief comments spread across levels, fairly equally distributed as marginal comments, end comments, and comments in the “comments” section of the grading rubric.

[Insert Table 2 here]

We further broke down the 19 comments into units based on what they referred to and obtained 53 such topical units, of which 14 (or 26%) referred to content and organization (thesis and topic sentences, overall essay structure, paragraph development and organization). The remaining comments focused on TAGs, usually by simply repeating the name of the problematic TAGs without additional metalinguistic information. Only four comments included encouragement or praise (see Appendix B and D).

4.2 Teacher use of error correction

Table 3 displays the distribution of DIR vs. IND given for the various types of linguistic errors Fatimah made throughout levels. This CF comes from all of the six different teachers, and includes the TAGs-oriented feedback expected at the institution (but not the supplemental comments). Overall, more IND CF was given, which highlights the alignment between the teachers’ practices and the institution’s requirements: from Level 104 on, the students are considered intermediate, and most of the CF they are supposed to receive is expected to be IND.

[Insert Table 3 here]

The areas that showed a tendency toward IND were in spelling (30% IND, 7% DIR), sentence structure (5% IND, 1% DIR), and noun endings (5% IND, 1.4% DIR). The areas where the teachers tended to give DIR were capitalization/punctuation (10% DIR, 1% IND), word choice (9% DIR, 3% IND), and verb form (5% DIR, 2.7% IND). The category of verb form received almost the same percent of DIR as IND CF (2%, 2.7%).

An analysis of three selected levels – one beginning, one intermediate, and one advanced – shows that Fatimah’s errors coincided with the TAGs considered important at the Center. The error types that occurred most frequently included spelling (65, or 43%), verb forms (19, or 12.5%), and word choice, sentence structure, and capitalization/punctuation (15, or 9.9% each). The data shown in Table 4 further emphasize that the teachers conformed to the Center’s recommendation to provide mostly DIR in the lower level and more IND in the intermediate and advanced levels.

[Insert Table 4 here]

4.3 Accuracy over time

From the data charted above, we chose to focus on the error types that occurred most frequently – spelling, verb forms, word choice, and sentence structure – in order to gain insight into the learner’s accuracy over the time in response to the CF she received that highlighted her areas of linguistic need. We decided to exclude capitalization and punctuation from the analysis in the interest of space and because they are considered lower order concerns (Keh, 1990). From the category initially labelled verb form, we selected the simple past because it constituted the

majority of the verb form errors. Six of the 19 errors with verb forms were gerunds, while the other 13 (68%) were errors with the simple past.

4.4 Spelling

The results in Table 5 reveal no improvement in the percentage of misspellings in Fatimah's writings. There is a decrease in spelling error rates in the intermediate and high intermediate levels 108 and 110, respectively; however, in the final level (112), Fatimah produced almost the same error rate as in the beginning level.

[Insert Table 5 here]

IND was provided more often than DIR on her spelling errors (see Table 5). In the beginning level, the teacher opted not to correct every misspelling, but in the higher levels most of the errors received CF, and this was most frequently IND. A qualitative difference can be noted in the kind of spelling errors Fatimah made over time. In the lower level course, her spelling errors occurred in one-syllable words (*live, snake*), whereas in the advanced level she misspelled multiple-syllable words such as *definition, furniture, intelligence, and academic*. Although the ratio of spelling errors increased in the advanced level, Fatimah's spelling of less complex words improved, together with her vocabulary.

4.5 Simple Past

[Insert Table 6 here]

Table 6 shows a leaning towards providing DIR for verb form errors in the lower levels, with IND emerging at the higher levels. Of the 20 errors with the simple past, 13 (65%) were

addressed with CF, revealing that the teachers were oriented towards marking most of the errors of the same type. Although, if we consider all levels, the developmental trend is somewhat up and down, in comparing Level 102 to Level 112, we notice a marked increase of successful uses of the simple past. Regarding her own development, Fatimah attributed her improvement to several factors: her grammar and speaking classes, memorization, but also the CF from the writing teachers. Direct CF in this verb form category may have helped her increase in successful use of the simple past.

4.6 Word Choice

Fatimah's teachers tended to provide DIR for word choice errors. They also gave CF for almost all of the errors made in this category. However, the error rate was not overwhelmingly high: 3.5% of the words used in the Level 102 essays were mistaken, but at the other levels the error rate hovered around 1%. The learner committed fewer errors of this type as time progressed, showing a decrease of 2.4% from Level 102 to Level 112. Despite some variation across time, a slight improvement occurred in Fatimah's lexical choice.

[Insert Table 7 here]

4.7 Sentence Structure

In contrast to word choice errors, sentence structure errors received more IND overall, and at levels 105 and 112 they received much more or only IND, respectively. All of the sentence structure errors made by our learner were met with CF. Fatimah's error rate in the area of sentence structure increased as she transitioned into the intermediate level (105), and then dropped but remained a bit higher than the error rate at which she started out as a beginner. In this case, the IND received seems to not have helped much.

[Insert Table 8 here]

4.8 Student Response to Teacher Comments

In the second interview, Fatimah explained that, when she receives a paper with CF, she first looks at her grade, after which she begins reading the CF. Remarkably, she stated that if a marginal or end comment is given, she reads that before anything else: “When I see good comments, I feel good. I feel like my writing has improved. I know it [the rubric and TAGs-focused CF] is of equal importance, but I read the comments first.”

In response to what error category was the most difficult for her to improve, Fatimah stated emphatically:

Wrong Word, or ‘use another word’ is the hardest to fix, because I don’t why this word is wrong, and why I need to choose another word. When I asked the teacher, sometimes they didn’t give me a clear answer, just ‘it’s wrong...we don’t say it in English. Just change it.’ I feel angry, because I need to know the reason.

Clearly, word choice is an error category that may cause difficulty and frustration. Fatimah’s need to know the reason why her word choice was not always correct was not satisfied by the CF she received, suggesting that CF other than that in the rubrics and TAGs-focused system at the Center was needed and wanted. Specifically, Fatimah expected more detailed comments, which she considered as more clear and helpful.

Fatimah shared that she pays attention to the CF she receives and tries to work with it, but she also demonstrated an interest in prioritizing content: “Sometimes it’s not about plural, agreement ... I know it. But when I have limited time, I focus on my idea, not the grammar.” Comments which focused on organization or clarity of ideas were appreciated for their usefulness. She expressed a desire for greater focus on ideas, and less on grammar, explaining

that the rubric weights the grammar category heavily: “It helps me to make my ideas more clear, to make my conclusion better, and gives me another way to write my essay, like include story, examples, etc. It is helpful for the future because I know when I go to university they will focus on ideas more than grammar.”

Fatimah also expressed a desire for greater clarity in teachers’ CF on grammar points. “Sometimes I made a grammar mistake, and didn’t know what was wrong with the grammar, and they told me ‘Just this. In English, it’s just this.’” While the TAGs- and rubric-based assessments may be precise for the teacher, it seems that these left the learner wanting more.

Finally, Fatimah highlighted the positive psychological effect she experienced from comments that went beyond TAGs and attached prefabricated rubrics. When a comment was positive, Fatimah expressed satisfaction: “I was happy with this comment because it shows how I improved. I felt encouraged.”

In sum, the interviews with the learner highlighted her perception that additional comments are the most informative, have clarifying power, and support learner motivation. Meaning and content also emerged as important for the learner, whereby some teachers’ strictly form-focused feedback, without supplemental comments, tended to address these aspects of the learner’s writing insufficiently.

5. Discussion

The approach to providing CF noted in this study was sensible in a number of ways. First of all, it was appropriately sequenced based on the learner’s level of proficiency. Since beginning level students may not yet have the capability to self-correct, the teachers’ tendency to give direct feedback (DIR) seems appropriate. As our learner developed, a mixture of DIR and indirect feedback (IND) was used, and IND emerged at the advanced level. IND requires students to take more responsibility for their errors (Ferris, 2011, p. 94), and therefore, the more

advanced the student is, the greater the expectation for self-correction. Our findings display the teachers' understanding that the lower level students benefit more from DIR than IND CF; they also highlight the soundness of the Center's approach with regard to the sequencing of DIR and IND at different proficiency levels.

The patterns of CF in this study were in accord with suggestions made in the L2 writing and CF literature on treatable vs. untreatable errors. Considered in that frame, the errors made by our learner fall in both the category of untreatable errors – specifically word choice and sentence structure – and treatable errors (simple past and spelling). Related to this distinction, Ferris (2011) reviews CF literature on L2 writing and advises that teachers should consider providing primarily DIR for untreatable errors and more IND for treatable errors (p. 95). For the most common type of untreatable error, namely word choice, Fatimah received more DIR throughout levels, and she improved. For sentence structure, she received primarily IND and continued to make errors throughout levels. Given the untreatable nature of these types of errors, Fatimah's interview comment that "[CF] is more helpful when the teacher writes the word for you" is sensible. Using coded IND for such a category only tells the learners that they need to "fix it," but gives them no help about how. As Ferris (2011) purports, one of the reasons why students do not correct all of their errors in response to written CF is "because they don't know how" (p. 26; also Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005, p. 201). By not explaining the reasons for lexical choices, a teacher is not providing the tools the student needs to make appropriate decisions in future writings.

Our findings related to Fatimah's use of the simple past also coincide with suggestions made about treatable errors. The simple past, which falls under the error category verb form and is considered a treatable error, is the third most common error type L2 writers make (according to Ferris, 2011, p. 36). Fatimah showed the most improvement in this category over time. She received mostly DIR for this category (unlike in Hyland & Hyland, 2006). It is inconclusive

whether the CF given was the key to the learner's improvement, or whether it was other factors (i.e., grammar classes, memorization, etc.). She concedes, however, that "corrections from the writing teachers made [her] focus on the verb tense." This, in turn, points to tenets of Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis and SLA theories that maintain that the principal merit of all CF is to draw a learner's attention to the input-output gap (Schmidt, 1990, 2001; Swain, 1985, 1995). These findings correspond with those of Hyland and Hyland (2006), in which, over the course of a semester, "the students made by far the most progress in the 'verb' category (including errors in both tense and form)" (p. 95). While we cannot claim that our learner's progress was solely due to the CF she received as error correction, supplemental comments, and rubrics, CF was one of the factors that focused her attention on linguistic aspects that needed to be improved and triggered uptake (defined, as by Lyster and Ranta (1997), and Storch and Wigglesworth (2010), as any reaction or attempt to implement CF). In the present study, the improvement displayed by our learner shows that the CF she received supported her development. Because her accuracy improved over the course of the year during which we followed her, and in the specific areas targeted by the CF received, it appears that, in this case, the uptake that occurred was not merely an immediate reaction to the CF but very likely retention/acquisition.

The teachers in this case study, by providing mainly IND for spelling errors, were again applying pedagogical practices that have been commended in the literature on CF in L2 writing. Spelling, as a treatable error (Ferris, 2011, p. 36), is seen as more amenable to IND. In this study, new spelling errors appeared in the more advanced levels, in which the learner attempted a riskier writing style, resulting in equal error commissions, but greater language expression. The presence of the new errors at the advanced level does not invalidate the importance of the CF received along the way.

Practices related to the use of supplemental comments diverged from the ideal described by L2 writing researchers who consider that a combination of marginal and end notes should be

used by teachers of L2 writing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005, p. 198). In the present case-study, the dearth of written comments deprived the student of much-desired personal feedback. Even though she knew all types of feedback were “of equal importance,” our learner sought the written comments first, because they made her feel her writing had improved. They also made her feel valued and respected as an L2 writer, because the teacher took time to communicate personally. Our learner may speak for other L2 writers who appreciate a teacher’s personal comments, providing them with both linguistic input and affective uplift. It appears that there is value in adopting pedagogical practices that include marginal and end comments for L2 writers.

Relative to the prominence of the TAGs-oriented CF, the analytic rubric played a secondary but reinforcing role. By design, it assigned more weight to form, and the teachers used it primarily to circle the section that best captured the learner’s achievement. As an assessment tool, it focused both the learner and the teacher on the evaluation criteria, while also helping expedite the grading process. However, the learner did not spontaneously offer comments about the rubric when discussing the kinds of feedback she was offered, demonstrating that, from the learner’s perspective, the rubric played a minor role. For her, the supplemental comments, followed by DIR and IND CF, were the most helpful learning tools, leaving the analytic rubric in a blind spot where its potential as a learning tool appears to have remained untapped. In the end, the rubric used at the Center served as an instrument that reinforced the established priorities and focused learners and teachers on the formal aspects of writing, while at times leaving the higher-order concerns largely unaddressed.

6. Conclusions and pedagogical implications

One of our main findings is that, for most of the errors made by the learner in this study, direct CF (DIR), which involves the teacher providing the student with the correct form, predominated at the beginning level, while indirect CF (IND), which only indicates that an error

has occurred (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 83), was more frequent at the higher levels and overall. Supplemental comments were rare outside of the TAGs-focused CF offered according to the system devised by the Center and its analytic rubrics, in which the teachers circled the range that fit the student's performance. The learner showed signs of linguistic development and increased accuracy over the course of the year. Although we cannot claim causation or generalizability, we can acknowledge that CF in the form of error correction, written comments, and rubrics was very present in the learner's writing class and was thus a contributing factor. However, the learner's preference was clearly in favor of more detailed supplemental comments, which she sought first and perceived as a clarifier and confidence booster. While the CF and rubrics given to the learner together with her writing may have supported her linguistic development, the institutional requirements to focus on form, or TAGs, and use an analytic rubric without much supplemental commentary, focused the teachers and the learner on formal linguistic aspects of L2 writing, neglecting higher order concerns (Keh, 1990). This in turn decreased the perceived relevance of the rubric as a learning tool, while augmenting its practical role in grading and use as an enforcer of institutional views. For the most part, the institution's emphasis on forms called TAGs and the sequencing of CF were not misguided. Our findings show that they were in line with the knowledge we have from L2 writing literature which suggests that DIR CF is beneficial at lower proficiency levels and when responding to untreatable errors. However, in this study, the teacher's reliance on the institutionally devised system of TAGs-focused CF and analytic rubrics limited the teachers' interaction with the learner through other meaningful comments that she expected, valued, and understood better. Attention to higher-order concerns is advocated for in the L2 writing scholarship (e.g., Evans, Hartshorn, & Allen Tuioti, 2010; Ferris, 2011; Hinkel, 2004). The effects of prioritizing accuracy until higher levels of proficiency is a matter of concern and should be the focus of future research.

Our conclusion with regard to RQ1 is that, when teachers are expected to structure their CF in ways prescribed by their institution, they tend to abide by the rules. Assessment that is contextualized and locally developed is commended in the literature (see Bruce & Hamp-Lyons, 2015; Crusan, 2010, 2014). However, we found that, in the process of following the institution's rules, teachers may only occasionally take the extra step to supplement their CF. Effects such as a hyper-focus on accuracy and the neglect of voice and rhetorical features of writing have been noted in the literature on rubrics-driven assessment (Balester, 2012; Broad, 2003; Kohn, 2006; Matsuda & Jeffery, 2012; Weigle, 2007; Wilson, 2006). Indeed, relying on a common, pre-established system for providing form-focused CF might have supported consistency and efficiency during the feedback and assessment process (Weigle, 2002). Brown (2007), who claims that teacher comments are the most useful feedback one can give, recommends that, if administrative mandates require a single score to student writing, the categories of *content*, *organization*, and *discourse* should be weighted over *syntax*, *vocabulary*, and *mechanics*, thereby highlighting content-based evaluation (p. 414). Rubric use does not necessarily imply form-focused feedback, but, in the case of our study, the rubric reflected the institution's prioritization of grammatical accuracy over content. In order to prepare learners for the writing courses and tasks awaiting them in the universities they join when they complete intensive English programs, the advanced writing courses at such institutions should balance accuracy and content.

The answer to RQ2 is two-fold: our learner's accuracy evolved positively, but other writing needs were neglected in the CF she received according to institutional guidelines. These findings corroborate those of much CF research which shows that students who "receive error feedback show progress in written accuracy over time" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 97), especially when the feedback is mostly direct at the lower levels of proficiency and for untreatable errors (see reviews by Ellis, 2009, and Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, pp. 49-74). As

pointed out above, a learner's improved accuracy over the course of a year attests to the positive role that CF which encompasses corrections, comments, and rubrics plays in triggering uptake and facilitating language development after focusing the learner on problematic forms.

However, there is more to writing than linguistic accuracy, and a question that remains for future research concerns the effect of predominantly form-focused CF on the development of rhetorical features in L2 writing.

Finally, in response to RQ3, this study shows a learner's appreciation of CF in general, as well as a higher value being attributed to CF realized as written comments (rather than codes and other symbols written on their paper or another analytic rubric). This finding, based on a single learner followed longitudinally, cannot be generalized, but can inspire further studies into ways to balance learner expectations and needs with the practicality of form-focused CF systems and rubrics. Other CF studies have noted that learners value teacher feedback on ideas and organization. As Hyland (2003) suggests, teacher written feedback should "respond to all aspects of student texts: structure, organization, style, content, and presentation" (p. 185) (also Brown, 2007), although a teacher need not respond to all aspects on every draft (Ferris, 2011) since responding to all aspects may dilute the focus of the feedback and overwhelm the learner, in addition to being impractical for the often overworked teachers in English language programs. Recent research suggests that a viable option which might address both the learners' expectation to receive feedback and the teachers' need to provide feedback effectively and efficiently is represented by automated, computer-generated feedback. Ware (2011), and Stevenson and Phakiti (2014), illustrate the merits of computer-generated feedback, especially when implemented by teachers who are well-trained in using feedback-generating software and utilize it consistently (not haphazardly) in tandem with personalized, teacher-generated feedback.

The teacher practices which emerged from the mini-case study highlighted areas for potential improvement. One conclusion is that teachers of L2 writing should receive training in

providing effective CF for their L2 writing students. Choosing the type of CF (direct vs. indirect) in response to error type (treatable vs. untreatable) could enhance the effectiveness of feedback, while providing more personal and thoughtful feedback in the form of mini-conferences, marginal comments, and endnotes, which could in turn increase the affective atmosphere and avoid the ‘just fix it’ mentality. There may be value in teachers’ study of problematic aspects of the target language in order to better explain and model – rather than simply label – linguistic choices to the student, considering that learners’ understanding of grammatical meta-language cannot be assumed to be reliable (Ferris et al., 2013). Additionally, certain assessment tools (i.e., rubrics) have their limitations, at times causing teachers to focus inadvertently on one category more than others. While rubrics provide cross-curricular standardization of assessment, they can blind teachers to the underlying values they are communicating to their students, obscuring the formative use of assessment processes and highlighting the value of feedback and assessment of learning (as noted by Lee, 2007, in her research with Hong Kong secondary teachers).

One of the pedagogical implications of the student perceptions is the need for a more holistic approach to CF for L2 writers. In the institutional context of this study, the required assessment rubrics swayed teachers toward a focus on grammar. Given that the institutional context was an intensive language center, where teachers are expected to focus on language rather than subject area (as in higher education institutions), it is not surprising or condemnable that the mandated rubrics focus on form more than content. Intensive language centers are often preparing students for university, where their voices may not be heard by potential professors if they cannot express themselves clearly and accurately. On the other hand, students like Fatimah may resent the over-focus on grammar, because they may feel as though their ideas are valued less than the way they express them. Balancing form- and content-focused feedback, as well as learner, teacher, and institutional priorities, is a continual challenge in any English language teaching context.

A second pedagogical implication of this study underscores the need for clarity in teacher explanations. Fatimah's frustration arose from the 'fix it' mentality, without explanations on how to 'fix it.' Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) also found that "students are frustrated by teacher feedback when it is illegible, cryptic (e.g. consisting of symbols, circles, single-work questions, comments), or confusing (e.g. consisting of questions that are unclear, suggestions that are difficult to incorporate into emergent drafts)" (p. 189). The need for fuller comments (i.e., marginal and endnotes), lessons on grammar points, follow-up conferences and other pedagogical techniques that are fine-tuned to the specific needs of the students and the mission of the institution (Ferris et al., 2013) seems apparent.

Our study illustrates that language learning and the assessment of writing are embedded in context. The case study presents a L2 writer in the institutional context of a year-long intensive English language program in which she and her institution acted on the understanding that accuracy matters in the world outside of the classroom. We recommend that L2 writing instruction should better balance learners' preparation for a world that is both accuracy-laden and idea-embracing.

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Appendix A: Sample rubrics used at the Center

Level 5-27

(105) 9884 H C

Addresses Topic?		Any submission that is not about the assigned topic is an automatic 0.		Yes	
	Above standard	Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory	Teacher comments
Grammatical Accuracy	30 Perfect control of time and voice. Accurate use of pronouns, articles, adjectives and all verb forms including "to be."	24 Accurate use of all basic grammatical forms. Uses compound sentences with some basic subordination, but clauses may not be in agreement. May have minor repeated errors based on (e.g. articles).	21 Most sentences follow basic grammar rules, but with error. No sentence has more than one grammatical error (based on level 5 standards).	0 Many sentences have basic grammatical errors (S-V agreement, verb form, pronoun agreement, run on sentences, etc.) The reader must guess at meanings. May have impressive attempts at higher level structures, but important gaps exist in basic grammar.	• Use of "do" • Spelling
Vocabulary	20 Vocabulary is varied and accurate. Word choices throughout the essay are targeted to enhance topic development. No spelling errors.	10 Although some errors in word choice, there is variety in vocabulary that enhances the topic. Only occasional misspellings of phonetically irregular words.	12 Although essay is easily understandable, limited vocabulary or spelling errors handicap topic development. Vocabulary may be repetitive or simplistic. No more than one spelling error per sentence.	0 Confusing word choices AND/OR spelling errors make essay difficult to understand; OR, vocabulary is too simplistic to fully address the topic.	Vocabulary
Length	13 More than 275 words, sufficient for ample exploration of supporting ideas.	10 More than 175 words. Paragraphs are of a sufficient length to allow for adequate exploration of supporting ideas.	8 More than 125 words, inadequate for exploration of supporting ideas.	0 Fewer than 125 words.	
Introduction/ Thesis statement	13 Intro clearly leads to the thesis statement. Statement is clear, predictive and leads the reader into the topic. Reader can anticipate the essay.	10 Uses an introduction, but is awkwardly constructed and lacks flow. Thesis statement summarizes the topic as it is addressed in the essay. May have errors in construction.	8 Attempt at an introduction. One sentence can be identified as a thesis statement, but it does not satisfactorily predict the essay. OR, thesis may be in the form of 2 sentences.	0 No introduction AND/OR no sentence(s) can be identified as a thesis statement. OR, statement is too general or too specific.	Good thesis statement
4/5 paragraph Development	12 Topic is fully developed over 4-5 paragraphs, each having a clear role. Internal organization is controlled within and between paragraphs. Each paragraph has a topic sentence that is developed with good supporting evidence.	10 Topic is developed using standard intro-development- conclusion, 4-5-paragraph format. Each body paragraph has a topic sentence that relates to the body of the paragraph. Some evidence and examples are supplied.	8 Topic is not fully developed. May have only 3 paragraphs. OR, conclusion may be too brief or inadequate. Internal development may be incomplete or missing in one key area.	0 Only partial development of topic. Key areas are unexplored. Fewer than 3 paragraphs. OR, does not apply paragraph formatting. OR, no conclusion.	
Signal words	12 Signal words are used correctly and range beyond what is taught in class. Words are chosen effectively and are used with effect.	10 Signal words are used as taught in class although usage may not be smooth. Punctuation is perfect.	8 Signal words are used; although some may be used incorrectly. OR, signal words are incorrectly punctuated.	0 No use, or mostly incorrect use, of signal words.	no extra linking words

Total points: 81

Revision/2nd draft: 84/100

Level 103 Target Achievement Goals (TAGs)

It is very important for you to write well in English. So, we have set Target Achievement Goals—TAGs—important objectives for your writing. We are focusing on the basics so that everyone will understand your writing. At the Center, you will work on your writing skills, using the TAGs to write good, clear, accurate sentences. Use these TAGs every time you write, and your writing will improve. We want you to pay attention to these details:

TAG 1—The Topic: Your writing assignment has to address the topic—this means that you must be sure that you write about the topic that your teacher gives you. If your writing does not address the topic, you will not meet your TAG.

TAG 2—Subjects and Verbs: All of your sentences must have subjects and verbs. Check your sentences for missing verbs or subjects. If you have 2 sentences missing verbs, or two sentences missing subjects, or one of each, you will not meet your TAG. If you have the same mistake many times, your teacher will count it as one mistake. Missing verb: Wrong: He a doctor. Right: He is a doctor. Missing subject: Wrong: Is a book on the table. Right: There is a book on the table.

TAG 3—Verb Tenses: All of your sentences must use the correct tenses in the correct forms. Check every verb in every sentence. If you have 2 sentences with incorrect tenses or incorrect forms, you will not meet your TAG. If you have the same mistake many times, your teacher will count it as one mistake. Tenses you should be able to use correctly by the end of 103: simple present, present continuous, simple past, and simple future with will and be going to. Incorrect tense: Wrong: I shop for clothes yesterday. Right: I shopped for clothes yesterday. Incomplete tense form: Wrong: John going to Denver. Right: John is going to Denver.

TAG 4—Word Order: All of your sentences must have the correct word order. Check every sentence for word order. If you have 2 sentences with mistakes in word order—statements, questions, or negatives—you will not meet your TAG. If you have the same mistake many times, your teacher will count it as one mistake. Standard Statement Word Order: Subject + Verb + Object + Manner Adverb + Place Adverb + Time Adverb Wrong: She studied her lessons last night at home hard. Right: She studied her lessons hard at home last night. Standard Question Word Order: Operator (Auxiliary or Helping Verb) + Subject + Base Form of Verb + Object + Manner Adverb + Place Adverb + Time Adverb Wrong: Why students are coming to America? Right: Why are students coming to America? Standard Negative Statement Word Order: Subject + Negative Operator (Auxiliary or Helping Verb) + Base Form of Verb + Object + Manner Adverb + Place Adverb + Time Adverb Wrong: I no have my pencil today. Right: I don't have my pencil today.

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Appendix B: Sample student papers with corrections (2) and rubric (1)

Level 5-26

Sent

The third kind of clothes is every day clothes.
 Sometimes it is not ^{sp}important ^{how} things ~~what~~ we look. We just
^{cap}want to be comfortable and doesn't matter what ~~do~~ we
 wear. When we ^{my}get home ~~cook~~ food or ~~watch~~ TV we
 wear T-shirt, sweat shirt, and pajamas, some example
 102 of clothes.
 In short, it is important to ^{sp}choose ^{choice} right
 clothes ^{un}in different events. Some times what ~~do~~ you
 wear, ~~it~~ affects ~~to~~ how people look to you.
 Clothes can be divided into three kinds:
 work clothes, ^{sp}special day clothes, and every day
 clothes. For me I like to wear ^{sp}simple clothes. What
 252 about you? ^{sp}

102 words

Level 2

102

88W

I ^{did} had many ^P things ^{Adj} fun ^{during} in the Christmas weekend.
 I went to ^{the} Zoo with my friends and ~~in~~ my teachers.
 I saw ^{pl} many ^{sing} animals such as ~~dolphin~~, sharks, ~~snacks~~ and
^{a tiger} a lion. I saw ^{a Dolphin show for the first time} in first time Dolphins show. After that,
 I went ~~to~~ home and watched ^a Comedy movie with my cousin
 and ate snacks. ^{The day} Today, after that, I went ~~shop~~
 went to ^{the} mall. On Christmas day, I saw snow
 my friend came to my house and had ~~at~~ a great
 time. ~~my~~ ^{at} my brother and my cousin ^{made} ~~but~~ ^a snowman,
 and I took ^a picture with him.*

listen

Christmas weekend

The next day,

I did many fun things during the Christmas weekend. I went to
 the Zoo with my friends and my teachers. I saw many
 animals such as penguins, bears, and tigers. I saw a Dolphin
 show for the first time. After that, I went home and watched
 a comedy movie with my cousins and ate snacks. The next day,
 I shopped ^{at} to the mall. On Christmas day, ~~I~~ my friends came to my
 home and had a great time. my brother and my cousins made a
 snowman and I took a picture with him.

Addresses Topic?		Any submission that is not about the assigned topic is an automatic 0.			Yes
	Above standard	Standard	Below Standard	Unsatisfactory	Teacher comments
Grammatical Accuracy	30 Perfect control of time and voice. Accurate use of pronouns, articles, adjectives and all verb forms including "to be."	24 Accurate use of all basic grammatical forms. Uses compound sentences with some basic subordination, but clauses may not be in agreement. May have minor repeated errors based on (e.g. articles).	21 Most sentences follow basic grammar rules, but with error. No sentence has more than one grammatical error (based on level 5 standards).	0 Many sentences have basic grammatical errors (S-V agreement, verb form, pronoun agreement, run on sentences, etc.) The reader must guess at meanings. May have impressive attempts at higher level structures, but important gaps exist in basic grammar.	Use of "do" Spelling
Vocabulary	20 Vocabulary is varied and accurate. Word choices throughout the essay are targeted to enhance topic development. No spelling errors.	18 Although some errors in word choice, there is variety in vocabulary that enhances the topic. Only occasional misspellings of phonetically irregular words.	12 Although essay is easily understandable, limited vocabulary or spelling errors handicap topic development. Vocabulary may be repetitive or simplistic. No more than one spelling error per sentence.	0 Confusing word choices AND/OR spelling errors make essay difficult to understand; OR, vocabulary is too simplistic to fully address the topic.	Vocabulary
Length	13 More than 275 words, sufficient for ample exploration of supporting ideas.	10 More than 175 words. Paragraphs are of a sufficient length to allow for adequate exploration of supporting ideas.	8 More than 125 words, inadequate for exploration of supporting ideas.	0 Fewer than 125 words.	
Introduction/ Thesis statement	13 Intro clearly leads to the thesis statement. Statement is clear, predictive and leads the reader into the topic. Reader can anticipate the essay.	10 Uses an introduction, but is awkwardly constructed and lacks flow. Thesis statement summarizes the topic as it is addressed in the essay. May have errors in construction.	8 Attempt at an introduction. One sentence can be identified a thesis statement, but it does not satisfactorily predict the essay. OR, thesis may be in the form of 2 sentences.	0 No introduction AND/OR no sentence(s) can be identified as a thesis statement. OR, statement is too general or too specific.	Good thesis statement
4/5 paragraph Development	12 Topic is fully developed over 4-5 paragraphs, each having a clear role. Internal organization is controlled within and between paragraphs. Each paragraph has a topic sentence that is developed with good supporting evidence.	10 Topic is developed using standard intro-development- conclusion, 4-5-paragraph format. Each body paragraph has a topic sentence that relates to the body of the paragraph. Some evidence and examples are supplied.	8 Topic is not fully developed. May have only 3 paragraphs. OR, conclusion may be too brief or inadequate. Internal development may be incomplete or missing in one key area.	0 Only partial development of topic. Key areas are unexplored. Fewer than 3 paragraphs. OR, does not apply paragraph formatting. OR, no conclusion.	
Signal words	12 Signal words are used correctly and range beyond what is taught in class. Words are chosen effectively and are used with effect.	10 Signal words are used as taught in class although usage may not be smooth. Punctuation is perfect.	8 Signal words are used; although some may be used incorrectly. OR, signal words are incorrectly punctuated.	0 No use, or mostly incorrect use, of signal words.	no extra linking words

Total points:

100

Revision/2nd draft:

84 / 100

81

105

25 x 4

Appendix C: Interview questions

Background Information

How old are you?

How long had you studied English before beginning at the Center?

What kind of classes had you previously taken (i.e kinds of teachers, writing assignments, philosophy of teaching writing, etc.)?

What are your future educational plans?

General Information about Study Program

When did you begin at the Center?

What has been your study trajectory, including breaks from study?

How many different teachers have you had for Reading/Writing?

Did you take outside classes?

Were you intensive (morning and afternoon classes) for each session?

How many hours of English study per week did you have?

Specific Questions about CF

Was the CF from the RW classes the main CF you received over the period of one year?

Did you receive CF from anywhere else?

In SSP classes, what kind and how much CF did you receive on your writing?

When you read these teacher comments, what was your response to them?

How do you feel about this particular comment?

Which comments did you pay more attention to?

What does a teacher's CF tell you about that teacher?

What is your opinion about the rubrics?

What is your opinion about teacher-student conferences?

How many teachers did conferences?

Do you think a teacher should make corrections at all? If so, why?

What is the most helpful CF for improving your writing?

Questions about Error Correction / Uptake

When you rewrote, how did you correct your errors?

When you wrote your next essay, were you consciously aware of the corrections you had made in the previous essays?

In your opinion, how did you learn to write the simple past form correctly?

How did you improve (or not improve) your spelling?

How did you correct your sentence structure issues?

Appendix D: Supplemental CF offered across levels

The levels not listed provided NO marginal or endnotes.

MARG = marginal comment RUBR = Rubric END = endnote

Level	Comments; idea units between / /	Where
105	<i>/I understand your fear to speak with others, but as you speak you will improve! So glad to have you in my class again! /</i>	END
	<i>/missing verbs/, /incomplete sentences/, /Good intro!/, /work on topic sentences/ and /example sentences/, /no conclusion/</i>	RUBR
	<i>/Well done! /Good – specific examples./ /Nice conclusion! /</i>	END
	<i>/use of “do”/, /spelling/, /vocabulary/, /good thesis statement/, /no extra linking words/</i>	RUBR
	<i>/didn’t add any linking words/</i>	MARG
106	<i>/one sentence for your thesis/ /Some grammar problems/ and /capitalization problems/</i>	MARG
108	<i>/What does this have to do with anything? Make sure the examples or points you include are actually relevant and support your topic sentence./</i>	MARG
	<i>/Thesis statement in the wrong place! /Write/think faster, to get it all done./</i>	RUBR
110	<i>/Watch your: verb tenses/, /clauses/, /capitalization/</i>	MARG
	<i>/Excellent revision! /</i>	END
	<i>/Watch your: plurals/, /S-V agreement/, /word forms/, /adv. Clauses/, /possessives/</i>	MARG
	<i>/3rd person verbs/, /gerunds/, /plurals/, /prepositions/</i>	RUBR
	<i>/watch articles/, /prepositions/, /clauses/, /verb tenses/</i>	RUBR
111	<i>/Nice simile! / /Beautiful personification (i.e. making the beach like a person)./</i>	MARG
	<i>/Well done, (student name). /Your picture is vivid and clear. I’d love to go./</i>	END
112	<i>/Fix TAGs: - spelling (from 500 list), /S-V agreement/, /missing verbs/ /Include more here about what kind of “inside things” (kindness? patience?)/ /Nice job including a personal experience./ /Make is the same form: choosing...paying/ /Fix conclusion/</i>	MARG
	<i>/In the essay you should explain what you mean by morals – good & bad morals./</i>	END
	<i>/Great sentence! / / Wonderful sentence! / /Not a complete sentence./ /Great ending sentence! You came full circle./ (endnote): /This essay holds together well, has developed ideas, advanced vocabulary, Good structure. Just the TAGS©/</i>	END
	<i>/When you type, try to line up words on left side of paper rather than in middle./</i>	END